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031458Z Jun 05

ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	A-00	ACO-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	EB-00
EUR-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	
VCE-00	AC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-00	OMB-00	PA-00	
PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00	
TRSE-00	T-00	IIP-00	PMB-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	
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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1723
INFO AMEMBASSY ABUJA
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

UNCLAS NDJAMENA 000887

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/C, INR, LONDON AND PARIS FOR
AFRICAWATHERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: LIFTING TERM LIMITS: CENI READY FOR REFERENDUM

REF: NDJAMENA 863

¶1. (SBU) Summary: As the ruling party goes all out to drum up votes and opposition parties call for a boycott, Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) President Djimtibaye Lapia Neldjita is confident that the public referendum to amend the constitution, including lifting presidential term limits, will run smoothly. Despite a few financial difficulties and material shortages, CENI is completing the delivery of electoral materials for the vote on June 6, which has been declared a public holiday. The results of the referendum will be made public on June 21 after CENI presents them to the Constitutional Court for validation. The date for the municipal and communal elections, originally set for June 26, will take place after the rainy season, most likely in October. The current registration will be revised in early 2006 to register those Chadians who have turned 18 and those that did not register in 2005. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Djimtibaye Lapia Neldjita, the President of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), told Ambassador and P/E officer on June 2 that the logistical arrangements for the public referendum on the constitutional amendments are in place. There were some financial and material shortages, but these have largely been overcome. He noted that the rains have already started in the south, resulting in several accidents with the materials. The hand-written lists have been computerized. CENI's N'Djamena office only has five members and the rest of CENI's staff is located in its sub-offices. The majority of the government's ministers are traveling throughout Chad campaigning for a "yes" vote.

¶3. (SBU) The Ambassador asked Djimtibaye about the criticisms of the voter registration exercise and results. Djimtibaye acknowledged the criticisms, but noted that the previous registration was done in 1993, twelve years ago. He said that the margin of discrepancy is not as high if one takes into factors such as the birth rate, the number of Chadians registering overseas, and irregular events, such as the return of some 300,000 Chadians from Libya to the north, particularly Faya and Kanem. He pointed out that over 520,000 Chadians are registered to vote overseas. Djimtibaye deftly explained the discrepancies between the high number of registered voters in the north versus the lower numbers in the south. He pointed out that most southerners are members of the opposition parties and probably adhered to the calls for a boycott of the registration. There are no opposition parties in the north so there were no calls for a boycott of the registration. This explains why the numbers of registered voters in the north is higher than the south, according to Djimtibaye.

¶4. (SBU) Djimtibaye responded to the Ambassador's question as to whether this electoral list will be used for the 2006

elections by explaining that each election year, the electoral registration list is revised. Voters who have turned 18 and those that are not registered will be registered in early 2006. There will be a one month revision period. This will give those voters who did not register for the referendum another opportunity. Their registration will be added to the current one. The presidential and legislative elections will take place sometime between March and May, prior to the rainy season.

¶15. (SBU) The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has not yet distributed a report prepared by a consultant who visited Chad in April to assess electoral preparations. Djimtibaye said that the consultant relayed concerns about the blockage in the political dialogue between the opposition and the government. Since promoting this dialogue is not CENI's task, Djimtibaye said that another entity, perhaps UNDP, will need to facilitate the dialogue. He also expressed the government's willingness to work on any of UNDP's recommendations, but is waiting for them. Djimtibaye acknowledged that most opposition parties will boycott the referendum.

¶16. (SBU) Djimtibaye responded positively to the Ambassador's request to permit embassy personnel to stop by polling stations. He asked the embassy to give the CENI a list of names and they would prepare badges to allow embassy personnel entry into polling places. The Ambassador said that the U.S. is following the referendum with great interest and hopes it transpires transparently. He expressed support for more open dialog between the ruling authorities and the opposition parties. He added that the U.S. would like to explore ways to support the upcoming electoral process to ensure transparency and acceptance by all political parties.

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COMMENT
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¶17. (SBU) Djimtibaye was relaxed and confident in CENI's preparations for the referendum. He was nonplused about the widespread criticism of the referendum process. Embassy personnel will informally monitor the voting process on June ¶16. We will report on the turn-out and any other problems that materialize, but note that the certified results will not be available until June 21.

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